4: Silva--192 M-4,5 (1947-1958) 1962 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

• 12

Chapter V

Observations on the Psychology of the Indian (1)

1. This chapter on the native Psychology arose, like the rest of them, from personal observations in different places and in diverse circumstances, as well as from inquiries presented to the Salesian Missionaries and those of Montfort and to other civilized persons knowledgeable about these tribes. A chapter about the psychological features more characteristic of the Uaupesina tribes had already been elaborated in the first outline of this work, organized in 1948. The opportunity for subsequent travels and for a more prolonged stay on the Uaupés suggested, as was natural, corrections, retouches, and additions to the work. It is in the present chapter, however, that the retouches and the corrections were more frequent, and perhaps where the difference between the original resumé and the present redaction of these studies will be more marked. The more prolonged and constant contact with the native obliged us to modify our opinion at one point or another. To some who might know the tribes that we study here only through information or through a quick visit, the traits that we outline here will perhaps seem dark. We are convinced, however, that not only are they quite objective, but those who have the opportunity to verify our observations in loco will grant that we are right. We can affirm that, before being put on these pages, our observations were read to persons who are very discerning and who lived intimately with these natives for decades, and all these persons assured us that our observations were accurate and corresponded to what they saw in the Indians of the different tribes of this region.

/138 cont./

153

/footnote 3 cont./ the Tukano language: first one would talk, then another, then two or more simultaneously, and afterwards all remained silent. We would first press this one, then that one, who seemed to understand our wishes. Only after we had opened the typed originals of the present work and the most unrestrained of them had read the excerpt that I was referring to did he add: "that is the way it is." In order to solve this simple question, 40 minutes went by!

• 12
*[192]
[196]

Properly speaking there is no term in the Tukano idiom equivalent to the word /139/ ultimate; they would say, more concretely: the one of the end, the one of the extremity (yaxpa-ti-kãgõ masc., yaxpa-ti-kãgõ, fem., yaxpa-ti-kãra, pl., yaxpa-ti-kãse, neuter).

For this reason one must not be content, insofar as possible, to obtain the translation of a word from only one individual or on only one occasion. Many times the word is heard pronounced differently. Is it a matter of faulty pronunciation by the individual? By which one of them? By all? Or is the divergence due to regional pronunciations? And then which of them will be the best? Or, finally, is it a matter of terms corresponding to a similar Portuguese word? Which of them would be the best? Would they be perfect synonyms? We point out these difficulties in order for one to understand the efforts of anyone who decides to study directly with the Indian the language of the latter. It is ten times more difficult than to study a foreign idiom with the help of teachers, grammars, and vocabularies.

[193]

The Indian is a man of reality, hence his difficulty with generalizations and abstractions. Instead of saying simply and abstractly head, he will prefer to say "my head, your head," etc. He does not say: to work, to eat (the Tukano language does not even have the infinitive form). He will say: "I work, you eat," etc.

7: Sorensen E-5 (1959-1963) 1967
SQ19 Tucano SQ19

104 man, English, etc. There is great variation in the spellings. The spellings in this paper tend to follow those of Koch-Grünberg, who still remains the general authority for the area as a whole. His spellings are close to those used for Nheengatú. They generally conform with those used for world-wide ethnographic spellings; in addition, they seem to have been the spellings more commonly used in English, German, Portuguese, and Spanish ethnographies on South America.

101 161 191 *Population estimate.* Population figures are hard to estimate. The following are very impressionistic. Tribes with 1,000–2,000 members: Tukano, Kubeo, Baré; Spanish-only speakers. Tribes with 500–1,000 members: Piratapuyo, Wanano, Desano. Tribes with 150–500 members: Tuyuka, Yurutí, Paneroa, Eduria, Karapana, Tatuyo, Barasana, Siriano, Tariano, Tabaino, Makuna, Tekuana, Datuana; Portuguese-only speakers. Of the latter tribes, Yurutí, Yekuana, and Datuana may number [797] fewer than 150 members. A few Salesian missionaries, in Brazil, are Italians.

There are probably a few hundred Makú in occasional contract with the multilingual Indians in this area.

Non-Indians probably number about 1,500 and are concentrated in the few air-strip towns.

For a very round figure, a population of 10,000 has been estimated for the multilingual area in which Tukano is the chief lingua franca. Of these 10,000, only the non-Indians, the Makú, and some of the Kubeo are not multilingual, so that over 80 percent of the population is multilingual. As the non-Indians are concentrated in the few air-strip towns and a dozen missionary posts, the effective distribution of multilingualism is much higher; close to 100 percent of the communities encountered in the area are multilingual. Of the multilingual Indians, well over 90 percent know Tukano at least as a lingua franca, with young children accounting for the majority of the few who do not.

NOTES

[114] [12] [1] This report is an expanded version of a paper presented to the Tenth Annual National Conference on Linguistics in New York on March 13, 1965. Field work was done in the summers of 1959, 1960, and 1963 and from June to December 1963. It was supported during much of this time by USPHS Research Grant MH-17,258. I wish to acknowledge the hospitality and cooperation extended to me by the Xaveriano missionary order in Colombia and the Salesian missionaries of the Brazilian Vaupés region. Various drafts of this paper were read by Drs. Charles

[P. 683-A]